



Weekly Drought Brief Monday February 10, 2014

CURRENT CONDITIONS

Recent Precipitation: Northern California received its largest rainstorm in 14 months over the weekend. This warm, wet storm originated to the far west in the Pacific Ocean and brought a highly-concentrated band of moisture to California. Over three inches of rain fell in several places in Northern California and more than three feet of snow fell in areas of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Southern California received almost no precipitation.

This storm has improved surface flows in California rivers and in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, and has improved supplies slightly in several reservoirs. However, considering that as of last week, over 20 inches of rain was needed to reach average precipitation levels by the end of the wet season, this storm only put a small dent in California's drought conditions.

Precipitation totals (in inches) from Monday, February 3 through Sunday, February 9::

- Folsom Dam: 4.49"
- Fresno: 0.92"
- Hetch Hetchy Reservoir: 2.47"
- Los Angeles: 0.14"
- Modesto: 0.75"
- Oroville: 5.24"
- Pollack Pines: 3.90"
- Redding: 4.08"
- Sacramento: 2.78"
- Shasta Dam: 4.44"
- Willits: 8.20"

Near-term Outlook for Precipitation: Rain and snowstorms will continue in Northern California through part of Monday and will cease by Tuesday morning. New storms are forecasted to reach California on Wednesday and may continue into the weekend. It is not yet clear how much additional precipitation these storms will bring.

**** Heavy rain and snow would have to fall throughout California very frequently from now until May to reach average annual rain and snowfall. Even with such precipitation, California would remain in drought conditions, due to low supplies from the two previous dry years. ****

Snow survey: The most recent [snowpack survey](#), conducted on January 30, shows California snow pack at 12% of normal.

Snow water content: [Current update](#) shows 16% of normal as of February 7, 2014.

Reservoir Levels (% capacity): [Reservoir Levels](#) as of Sunday February 9 are still very low:: Don Pedro 52%; Exchequer 21%; Folsom Lake 22%; Lake Oroville 37%; Millerton Lake 36%; New Melones 43%; Pine Flat 18%; San Luis 30%; Shasta 37%; and Trinity Lake 47%.

Vulnerable Water Systems: The California Department of Public Health has identified several communities with potential drinking water shortages in the coming months. The Department is providing technical and funding assistance to these communities to ensure continued drinking

water availability, and continues to monitor across the state to determine where it can provide support. Updated information can be found at the [CDPH Drinking Water Program](#) website.

Fire Danger: 487 fires have been reported across the state so far in 2014, burning over 1,131 acres. CALFIRE reports that current fire activity is well above the year-to-date figure for 2013 (2 fires burning 301 acres), as well as the annual year-to-date average (84 fires burning 143 acres). There has been a 480% increase in fire activity over an average year and a 690% increase in acres burned.

KEY ACTION ITEMS FROM LAST WEEK

Federal Government

- **USDA support to farmers:** Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced last Monday that [\\$20 million will be made immediately available](#) to California farmers to enable cover crops, protection of grazing lands, and irrigation efficiency projects. Interested farmers have until March 3 to apply for funds.
- **Bureau of Reclamation expands coordination with the State:** USBR Commissioner Mike Connor traveled to California on Wednesday to meet with federal and state agencies responding to the drought through water management. He [detailed drought-related operations at the federal water project and current coordination](#) with state counterparts to conserve water and protect the state and federal water systems.
- **Water management funding announced:** The Natural Resources Conservation Service, a program of USDA, made an additional [\\$14 million in funding](#) available on Wednesday to water districts and farmers for projects that improve water management in California.
- **FERC :** The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission wrote to California hydropower generators advising them to work with state and federal agencies to consider variances from their FERC licenses that would allow them to conserve water behind their dams.
- **Davis selected as Regional Climate Hub:** The USDA announced the selection of seven regional centers to address climate change-related risks to agriculture including invasive pests, floods, and regional droughts. Davis, California was selected as the hub of the southwest region. This center will translate science and research into practical information for farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners on ways to adapt and adjust resource management to shifting conditions.
- **Federal Emergency Designations:** The U.S. Department of Agriculture [has issued Emergency Declarations](#) in 53 California counties, with contiguous designations for a total of 57 counties. Emergency declarations have been established by the [U.S. Small Business Administration](#) that cover 57 counties. Imperial County is the only county not declared by either agency.

State Government

- **Conservation Campaign:** State government continues to amplify the Governor's call for 20% water use reduction through its [Save our Water](#) campaign. Radio advertising across the state is in its third week.
- **State and federal agencies open Delta Cross Channel gates:** Last week, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the California Department of Water Resources, and other state federal agencies began open and closing the Delta Cross Channel gates on a dynamic basis to protect freshwater supplies in the Delta while ensuring environmental protections.

- **Water Curtailments:** The Water Resources Control Board prepared curtailments of certain junior water right holders in the Sacramento and San Joaquin River systems, as announced on January 31. These curtailments will be made when available water supplies do not meet current water demand. Current, up-to-date information on water curtailments is provided on the [State Water Board's website](#).
- **State Water Board working with FERC to conserve water in reservoirs:** The [State Water Board and FERC announced on Friday that they are working together](#) to identify certain rivers that can modify river flows for conservation purposes by working with FERC-licensed hydropower generators to adjust river flows typically required under the generators' licenses.
- **Fish and Game Commission Adopts Emergency Regulations-** The California Fish and Game Commission [adopted emergency regulations](#) to close many rivers to sport fishing. This Commission action follows [administrative closures](#) of other smaller rivers and streams made by the Department Fish and Wildlife the week prior.
- **State agencies reduce water usage:** California state governmental agencies and departments detailed [immediate actions](#) to curb water use at their facilities, including a moratorium on new landscaping projects and outdoor watering of non-permanent landscaping.
- **CDFA Drought Web Page:** The California Department of Food and Agriculture augmented its [drought resources website](#) with full Spanish language translation. The site provides a one-stop information to farmers, ranchers and farmworkers about the drought and currently available support to them.
- **UC reports California water near decade low:** Researchers at UC-Irvine last week announced that the water storage in the Sacramento and San Joaquin River basins are near [decade lows](#). Researchers used satellite data from NASA to establish their findings.
- **California Tribes consulted on drought response:** State officials held teleconference briefing with the Southern California Tribal Chairs Association (SCTCA) and the Northern California Tribal Chairs Association (NCTCA) to update tribal leaders on state and federal programs, and assistance to support local communities' response to the drought.
- **Cost Data:** Cal OES is working with state agencies and local governments to gather drought-related costs, which is reported weekly to the Drought Task Force.
- **Governor's Drought Task Force:** The Task Force continues to meet daily to take actions that conserve water and coordinate state response to the drought.

Local Government

- **Water Agency Conservation Efforts:** [Local water agencies across the state](#) are implementing conservation programs, which include voluntary calls for reduced water use and conservation, and mandatory restrictions where water shortages are worst.
 - **Local Emergency Proclamations** (County, City, Tribal): A total of 13 local emergency Proclamations have been received to date from city, county or tribal governments:
 - **Counties:** Glenn County, Inyo County, Kern County, Kings County, Madera County, Mendocino County, Santa Barbara County, San Joaquin County, Tulare County, Tuolumne County
 - **Cities:** Brookside Township-Mendocino County, City of Willits in Mendocino County
 - **Tribes:** Hoopa Valley Tribe in Humboldt County, Yurok Tribe in Del Norte County
- Pending local proclamations include:** Amador County (February 11), Siskiyou County (February 11), Merced County (February 25).

DROUGHT RELATED WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION

Governor's [Proclamation of Drought Emergency](#)
State's Water Conservation Campaign, [Save our Water](#)
California Department of Food and Agriculture, [Drought information](#)
California Department of Water Resources [Current Water Conditions](#)
California Data Exchange Center, [Snow Pack/Water Levels](#)
California State Water Resources Control Board, Water Rights, [Drought Info and Actions](#)
California Natural Resources Agency, [Drought Info and Actions](#)
California Department of Public Health, Drinking Water [CDPH Drinking Water Program](#)
California State Water Project, [Information](#)
USDA Drought Designations by County [CA County Designations](#)
USDA Disaster and Drought Assistance Information [USDA Programs](#)